

SECRET

16 May 1961

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCESMETHODS EXEMPTION 3828  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, EE/Germany

SUBJECT : Conversation with General Adolph Heusinger

1. On Sunday, 7 May 1961, General Heusinger, his wife Gerta, and daughter Ada, joined the undersigned and his family for a quiet supper. Most of the evening and dinner was spent in discussing their arrival, their move into a new house, problems of transportation, prices, shopping centers, etc. However, during those few moments in which I talked to the General alone he dusted off quite a few subjects around the world. For what they are worth, if only to show General Heusinger's present orientation, I am making a report of them.

2. The French Situation: General Heusinger is particularly disturbed about the effect of the French Generals' revolution upon France's military strength and, by transfer, the strength of NATO. He had not been surprised to learn that many of the French generals were against De Gaulle's policies. They have all been fairly outspoken in their conversations with General Heusinger. However, when he last spoke with General Maurice Challe in February, he did not get the feeling that General Challe was about to embark upon revolution. But after it began, General Heusinger was quite surprised that the mutiny lasted so short a period of time. He is sure that General Challe, being a very careful man, had thoroughly canvassed the situation and was convinced that he would succeed. The trials will be used by the defendants to place the accuser, De Gaulle, on trial for his Algerian policies. He is convinced that since they expect to die, they will use the tribunal as a platform for expressing their most radical views. The results, he fears, will be frightful. France will become even more divided against herself. He added that General Pierre Jacquot would soon be in the headlines as another anti-De Gaullist, but not behind bars, thus causing further rifts in public opinion on the mutiny.

3. U. S. Posture: General Heusinger avoided any comment upon the recent setbacks. However, he did say that in recent discussions with Greeks and Turks on the NATO staff he had found them far more disturbed than any others by the turn of events. They fear that the U.S. may leave them defenseless against Communist aggression. He is personally convinced that the U.S. would defend Germany or any other country if there were overt Soviet aggression. He is sure (although less so) that the U.S. would take a definite stand in opposition to Soviet moves other than by overt aggression against Berlin. However, the Greeks and the Turks are faced, not so much with the danger of overt aggression as with that of subversion and internal sedition. He cited an uprising of the Turkish Kurds instigated

SECRET

SECRET

- 2 -

by the Soviets as the type of Communist action the Turks are fearing because the U.S. finds it difficult to intervene in such "internal" affairs. As further evidence of general uncertainty about the U.S. ability to assist its allies, he told the undersigned about conversations he had with Mayor Willy Brandt. Shortly after the precipitation of the Berlin crisis, Brandt had come to the West German Defense Ministry to ask for advice on how to create, arm and train pro-West para-militia in the West Berlin industrial plants. He feared - and General Heusinger believed his fear justified - that Berlin would not fall as the result of a Soviet or East German cross-border move, but rather as the result of an uprising of West Berlin workers. Such an uprising, even though it were obviously Communist supported, armed, and directed would not necessarily present the United States with a clear excuse for intervention. Heusinger expects the Berlin crisis to become acute again in the near future possibly as the result of some East German covert act. He had no specific basis for this belief but expressed pessimism with regard to any solution of the East German problem short of unification. He agreed that the situation for the East German government was becoming untenable due to the flight of skilled workers and professionals, but reports that Chinese workers are being imported to work in the Silesian mines have indicated to him that the Soviet Union is willing to take drastic steps to solve the manpower shortage problem. If in fact the Soviet Union engages upon a mass movement of surplus labor into East Germany, he feels that this will be the beginning of the end and a very dangerous situation will result.

4. The rest of the conversation was devoted to a somewhat philosophical discussion of the effect of rapid communications upon both military and diplomatic events. Heusinger pointed out that in the period before World War II communications between ambassadors and their chiefs of state and between commanders and their higher headquarters had been so slow that the subordinates were forced to take independent action. He feels that this was a good thing since it placed the responsibility for decisions at a lower level and required the man who best could make the decision to make it on his own. Today, on the other hand, a subordinate can get on the wire to his chief, present a capsule, and hence incomplete, picture of the situation for the superior's decision. Decisions are thus made at a level where the information is not adequate and lower echelons are able to avoid responsibility. Ambassadors have become messenger boys and chiefs of state feel they would rather send their own messengers. He cited his rush trip to Washington after the publication in the American press of the "Radford Plan" as an example. When Adenauer called him in to ask him about the "Plan" he advised him that he should not place too much dependence upon the American press, and should trust what he was being told by the American diplomats. Nevertheless, Heusinger was sent to Washington to see his old friend, the Admiral, and find out what truths there were in the reports. He learned nothing he did not already suspect and

SECRET

SECRET

- 3 -

brought back to Adenauer no new information. In summary, Heusinger feels rapid communications and rapid travel may not have brought governments closer together, but may actually separate us.

*S* C/EE/A *J*

SECRET